

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: SWEL, ICRC, CG
SUBJECT: RED CROSS ACTIVITIES IN SHABA

1. SUMMARY: FIVE PERSON ICRC TEAM BEGAN FUNCTIONING IN SHABA OVER WEEKEND OF JUNE 24, ALLOWING TEMPORARY REPRESENTATIVE STEINMANN TO RETURN TO HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN LUSAKA. RELIEF FOOD SHIPMENTS HAVE BEGUN ARRIVING BUT DISTRIBUTION IS NOT PLANNED BEFORE JUNE 30. ICRC DOES NOT FEEL THAT SITUATION IN KOLWEZI IS URGENT AS WAS ORIGINALLY STATED BY ZAIRIANS RED CROSS LEADERSHIP. ICRC IS NOW TRYING TO REPLACE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS OFFICIALS IN SHABA BECAUSE OF UNCOOPERATIVENESS AND SUSPECTED CORRUPTION. END SUMMARY

2. REPRESENTATIVES OF ICRC/GENEVA MR JEAN COURVOISIER ARRIVED IN LUBUMBASHI ON JUNE 23 TO ASSUME CHARGE OF ICRC SHABA RELIEF OPERATIONS. LUSAKA DELEGATE FREDERICK STEINEMAN WHO HAD DONE PRELIMINARY PLANNING FOR SHABA RELIEF DEPARTED FOR LUSAKA ON JUNE 25 TO RESUME HIS OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.
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3. SHABAN ICRC TEAM IS COMPOSED OF FOUR INDIVIDUALS IN ADDITION TO COURVOISIER: A DOCTOR, A RELIEF SPECIALISTS, A TRACING EXPERT, AND A RADIO OPERATOR. COURVOISIER IN ADDITION TO COORDINATING ICRC ACTIVITIES WILL BE LOOKING INTO MORE DELICATE QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE PRISONER QUESTION. COURVOISIER HAS

DECIDED TO SET UP HEADQUARTERS IN LUBUMBASHI. HE AND RADIO OPERATOR WILL REMAIN HERE, CO-LOCATED WITH LOCAL RED CROSS AUTHORITIES WHILE THE 3 EXPERTS MOVE TO KOLWEZI. DECISION TO KEEP HEADQUARTERS IN LUBUMBASHI AIMED PARTIALLY AT KEEPING LOCAL RED CROSS OFFICIALS AWAY FROM RELIEF SUPPLIES IN KOLWEZI.

4. RELIEF EXPERT AND DOCTOR WHO ARRIVED JUNE 27 SPENT THE FOLLOWING WEEK IN KOLWEZI ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS. THEY CONCLUDED THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT GRAVE BY STAND OF OTHER PLACES WHERE THEY HAVE WORKED. THEY FEEL THAT ZAIRIAN RED CROSS LEADERS HAVE GREATLY OVERSTATED THE QUANTITY OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED AND THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION. THEY SUSPECT THAT THE ZAIRIANS MAY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION TO ALLOW THE RAPID FLOW OF GOODS WITHOUT TIGHT CONTROLS.

5. MILK, MEDICAL SUPPLIES, BLANKETS AND CLOTHING WHICH ARRIVED FROM GENEVA ON JUNE 16 WERE SENT BY PLANE ON JUNE 17-18 TO KOLWEZI WHERE THEY WERE STORED IN GECAMINES WAREHOUSE. MAIZE FLOUR PURCHASED FROM AMBIA IS ENROUTE TO KOOWEZI BY TRAIN. SOME OF OTHER COMMODITIES LIKE BEANS AND DRIED FISH ARE BEING ACQUIRED LOCALLY. FIRST DISTRIBUTIONS OF MOST RECENT SHIPMENTS ARE NOT EXPECTED UNTIL ABOUT JUNE 30. BY THEN ICRC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOPES PAN AFRICAN FORCE WILL BE IN FIRM CONTROL OF KOLWEZI AND THEY WILL HAVE PROPER INTERNAL CONTROLS TO ASSURE BEST POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION.

6. ICRC OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY QUALITY OF VOLUNTEERS, BUT DISTURBED OVER UNWILLINGNESS OF ZAIRIAN RED CROSS LEADERSHIP TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY. HONESTY AT THE TOP OF ZAIRIAN RED CROSS IS ANOTHER QUESTIONABLE AREA. AS ONE OF HIS FIRST ACTIONS, COURVOISIER, IS ATTEMPTING TO HAVE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS VICE PRESIDENT KALONJI WHO HEADED ZAIRIAN SIDE OF RELIEF EFFORTS, RELIEVED OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNCOOPERATIVENESS (AFTER ICRC HIRED PLAN TO VISIT KIVU AREA FOR PURCHASE OF RELIEF SUPPLIES HE REFUSED AT LAST MINUTE TO MAKE TRIP) AND SUSPECTED CORRUPTION. AFTER NEARLY ONE MONTH IN THE FIELD, ZAIRIAN RED CROSS WORKERS HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY LIVING ALLOWANCE. ICRC DECIDED TO PAY WORKERS FROM ITS OWN FUNDS AT RATE OF 10 ZAIRIES PER DAY (ABOUT \$12.50 AT OFFICIAL RATE) FOR FIRST WEEK OF WORK AND SUBSTANTIALLY LESS FOR COMING WEEKS. FIRST PAYMENT TO WORKERS WAS FINALLY MADE ON JUNE 27.

7. COMMENT: ICRC TEAM SEEMS TO BE WELL AWARE OF
LIKELY PITFALLS FOR PROGRAM IN ZAIRE AND ARE TAKING
STEPS TO MINIMIZE LOSSES. THEY HAVE INDICATED THAT
GREATEST THREAT TO EFFECTIVE PROGRAM IS LIKELY TO BE
INTERFERENCE FROM OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE ZAIRIAN RED
CROSS AND LOCAL ZAIRIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

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